

“What’s Behind Your Actions?” based on Matthew 5:21-37

Nelson Mandela: “To be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”

The one issue at the center of all controversy is divisiveness – we don’t see things the same way.

- Examples of the Corinthian Church, the contrast between evolution and creation
- Jesus has some tough things to say in the sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5-7
- Suggests that our thoughts give rise to our actions

God gave ‘the Law’ to guide our actions

- Humanity made laws into barriers, authorities turned them into burdens
- Limited the people’s actions because of fear of transgressing

Jesus went to root of the Law in saying that the ‘thought is the seed of the action’. Deeper desire of God is that the cycle is broken at the outset, with the thought which is wrong.

- Plato’s example of the charioteer trying to rein in 2 powerful horses – anger or passion, and reason or order. Only as they’re held in balance can they be fulfilled in a loving way.
- Jesus speaks of the deeper anger that broods and becomes toxic
- We must be committed to healing and forgiveness, not retaliation and revenge
- Example: Aaron Miller, went from Middle East negotiator to president of Seeds of Peace
- We must battle our own hateful instincts, leave offerings at altar and seek person wronged

Hard-core Christian love is not about affection and friendship, but forgiveness and reconciliation. The antidote we find in the Gospel is acceptance, understanding, compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation. “To be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in such a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.” May we live such a life, with God’s help!